

# CORRA

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# STRIKE

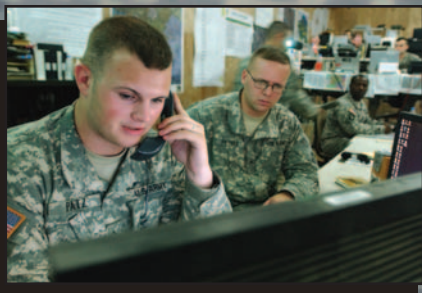


## 4th Special Troops Battalion



4BCT's

STRONG AND TRUE



TOC OPS --pg.10



American Soldiers --pg. 19





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Col. Michael F. Beech

# COBRA<sup>6</sup> on POINT

This has been a very busy month for all of us. We have continued to see progress in many areas but we have also been reminded why we are here. We will persist in our efforts to help the Iraqi people unite against violence and to assist the Iraqi government to provide security, law and order.

During our seven months deployed we have seen many successes in this war on terrorism to include three successful elections,

the establishment of a democratically elected representative government working under a new constitution and the end of Zarqawi.

Even though Iraq's first ever government of national unity, is barely two months old, our Iraqi counterparts continue to take the lead in providing essential services and more security for their country. We remain steadfast in our commitment to assisting the Iraqi people in their efforts to defend their sovereignty.

Recent acts in the neighborhoods of Al Jihad, Bayaa and Ameriyah demonstrate an increase in sophistication and further disregard for life of innocent Iraqi people, men, women and children.

However, the numbers of attacks in Al Rasheed District are down.

Recent tips provided by Baghdad citizens to Iraqi soldiers and police have led to the capture or killing of insurgents and the prevented bombing and kidnapping plots.

Iraqi citizens volunteer as new recruits daily, volunteering to defend their country for the promise of a better way of life and a safe and secure homeland.

The terrorists see the changes that have taken place in a people once held under the oppression of a tyrant and are facing their defeat as Iraqis are leading their country.

Baghdad is the center that everybody is fighting for. It is your determination and perseverance in our efforts to see this challenge through that will shape the future of the Iraqi people, this region and the future safety of America. We

need to remain tactically patient about Iraq, while being strategically optimistic. A year ago, terrorism and the insurgency against the Coalition and the Iraqi security forces were the principal sources of instability. The terrorists have adapted by exploiting Iraq's sectarian composition. Particularly since the bombing of the Golden Mosque in February, violent sectarianism is now the main challenge.

And, we could not do it without the untiring support of our family and friends back home. We serve proudly knowing that they are okay. I appreciate the efforts of our rear detachment and Family Readiness Groups helping us to remain combat ready and mission focused. Together, we can and will succeed.--COBRA STRIKE!

## FROM THE FRONT

Once there was an Army where Soldiers took an Army Physical Readiness Test instead of an Army Physical Fitness Test.

There was Olive Drab Green uniforms called fatigues, and the barometer for a squared away Soldier in this uniform was a high and tight, spit shine boots and a quick check by an NCO of the "Gig Line." A gig line was nothing more than a place over the navel where the belt's buckle, shirt line and trouser's zipper flap met and lined up.

If it didn't line up you were not squared away, and your NCO would let you know.

The last few years, the U.S. Army has changed headgear, its PT uniform again, and re-aligned the force.

In addition, we are currently making a transition from Battle Dress Uniforms to Army Combat Uniforms, and now the army will give Dress Blues to everyone during initial entry and do away with the Army "Greens" Class A Uniform.

The U.S. Army has changed a lot over the past few years. Our Army continues to make changes today, and the organization will continue to make changes in the future. In spite of these changes, some things remain the same--like taking care of

Soldiers and enforcing a standard.

It is my belief that there are times when the two go together. One of those times includes the

wear of personal protective equipment. The Army recognizes that this is taking care of Soldiers, spending millions of dollars to issue it to us through the Rapid Field Initiative program.

As leaders, we must do our part by enforcing guys to wear the gear for their on safety. If I am the patrol leader preparing to go on a mission, it is my responsibility to ensure that everyone is wearing their neck guard, eye protection and gloves. Enforcing this standard can be the difference in a Soldier losing an eye or suffering severe burns to his hands or worse ...

Recently in the hospital, a doctor said to me, "CSM, I need you to tell the soldiers to wear their gloves." We were looking at a



Command Sgt. Maj. John E. Moody, Jr.

Soldier whose hands were burnt and mangled to the point that he wouldn't be able to use them in the future.

At that moment, the following questions entered my mind. Could those injuries have been prevented? Is the word getting down to the lowest level? Did the NCO check? Was he missing his gloves when they left for the mission? Why weren't they on? The only question that I could

answer yes to is that I know the injuries were preventable.

I ask the Squad Leaders, Section Sergeants and Platoon Sergeants, can you answer the rest?

We could not do this mission without the Soldiers. We need them around and want them around during the deployment, as well as back home; and we owe it to them to take care of them, whether they realize it or not.

Make your Soldiers wear the gear that was designed to protect them. Enforcing this standard is taking care of Soldiers. Some things never change! And never will. Accomplishment of my Mission and the Welfare of my Troops--No change!



# 4th STB

## the Beauty of Combat Support

**BLACK AND WHITE  
RECTANGLES=Day and  
Night around the clock  
combat readiness.**

**RED=  
courage  
and action**

**GOLD=  
excellence  
and high  
achievement**



**GRIFFON=STRENGTH  
and VIGILANCE**

**SWORD=combat support  
mission**

**LIGHTNING=swift  
deployment, communications,  
and intelligence operations**



*Story by Staff Sgt. Brent Williams  
and Pfc. Jason Dangel*

The lighting flash, symbolic for mobility, communications and intelligence operations, and a sword, the emblem of security and combat support mission, stand guard before a field of black and white, day and night.

The weapons cross intertwined in the talons of a black eagle-winged Griffon, strong and true. The heraldic beast grasps the keys to the success that enables the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division to accomplish its mission in Iraq.

The 4th Special Troops Battalion, deployed with the "Cobra" Combat Team, is as dynamic and true as its coat of arms.

Responsible to man, arm, fuel, fix and move the forward elements of the Cobra Brigade, the Soldiers of 4th STB provide logistics, personnel and health services support for the 4th BCT Headquarters and

its battalions, said Command Sgt. Major Anthony Walker.

"Our support to any of the many brigade missions is critical," Walker said.

Each company within battalion is responsible for one element of support that is critical to the morale, health and welfare and combat readiness of the Soldiers in 4th BCT.

"There is no one company, platoon or section greater than the sum," explained the native of Springfield, Mass. "If a section fails to complete a mission task then the battalions fails across the board."

In addition to its duties to provide combat service support for the Brigade, the Special Troops Battalion is responsible for the successful completion of three vital missions while deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, said Lt. Col. Joseph Gandara, commander, 4th STB.

Initially, the battalion is responsible for

operating the Forward Operating Base Prosperity Mayor's Cell dedicated to providing life support services for 4th BCT Soldiers.

Their mission essential duties range from building to space allocation to upgrades and master planning for base operations, said Gandara, a graduate of Texas Agricultural and Mechanical University in El Paso, Texas.

"If we can't keep our troops living in conditions they'll accept--keep power running and the functions of a normal FOB running--then essentially we would start losing the morale of the Soldiers in the brigade," he explained.

According to Gandara, however, the most important mission charged to the support battalion is the operations of the detainee holding facility for the 4th Brigade Combat Team and the 4th Infantry Division.



"It is extremely vital in supporting the brigade," Gandara said, "because of the past history of Abu Ghraib and the perceived strategic operational and tactical level of abuse of the detainees, it is absolutely critical that we run a zero defects operation in terms of prisoner abuse--vital not only for the brigade, frankly, but for the entire theater."

The most challenging, yet rewarding, is 4th STB's unique mission to help Iraqis create a stable living environment for the citizens of Baghdad and Iraq, said Gandara.

4th STB's Infrastructure Coordination Element develops, manages and synchronizes both infrastructure and large scale construction projects within the Brigade's area of operations.

The team of Soldiers and civil engineers engage in local contracting, construction management and oversight of said projects designed to help restore and improve essential services, such as electricity, water and sanitation in Baghdad.

Gandara works with the Iraqi ministries, director generals and the local engineers to ensure the security and success of the new Iraqi government and its citizens.

"I also see my job as going out and looking at my projects and looking at the conditions that people are living in to make a better assessment of what is needed."

Combat support unit typically remain



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Brent Williams

**Sgt. Zachary Cassner, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 4th Special Troops Battalion, conducts a convoy brief for the security detail before embarking on a mission with the battalion's Infrastructure Coordination Element at Forward Operating Base Prosperity.**

stationary, and act as the main support hub for operations within a brigade. The Soldiers of the 4th STB have done just that at multiple levels and multiple echelons within the U.S. Army and with the Iraqi people, said Gandara.

"The beauty of the mission, that this battalion has, is that we are combat support, and every one of the Soldiers in this battalion has provided combat support to every Soldier in this brigade," he said. "I think

that every Soldier in the battalion can walk away knowing that they actually made a contribution ensuring that future Soldiers here will have it just a little bit better."

As the Griffon Soldiers continue to provide quintessential combat support services to the Cobra Brigade, Walker urges his Soldiers to stay focused on the mission at hand.

"When we deployed, the leadership was great, and yet still learning their roles and responsibility within the brigade," he said. "As with any great team we have to continue to learn and grow and keep our focus on the task at hand."

Walker acknowledged the Griffon Battalion's success, but said he aspires for his Soldiers to achieve an even higher level of success during the remainder of the deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"The main reason for our success has been the leadership and the quality of the individual STB Soldier," the Battalion Command Sergeant Major explained. "At this point we have met our mission goals; we do, however, have much farther to go."

**Sgt. Rommell Worrell, power generation equipment repairer, 4th Special Troops Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, works on a generator motor at the Griffin Motor Pool at Forward Operating Base Prosperity.**



U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Jason Dangel



# 4STB ICE

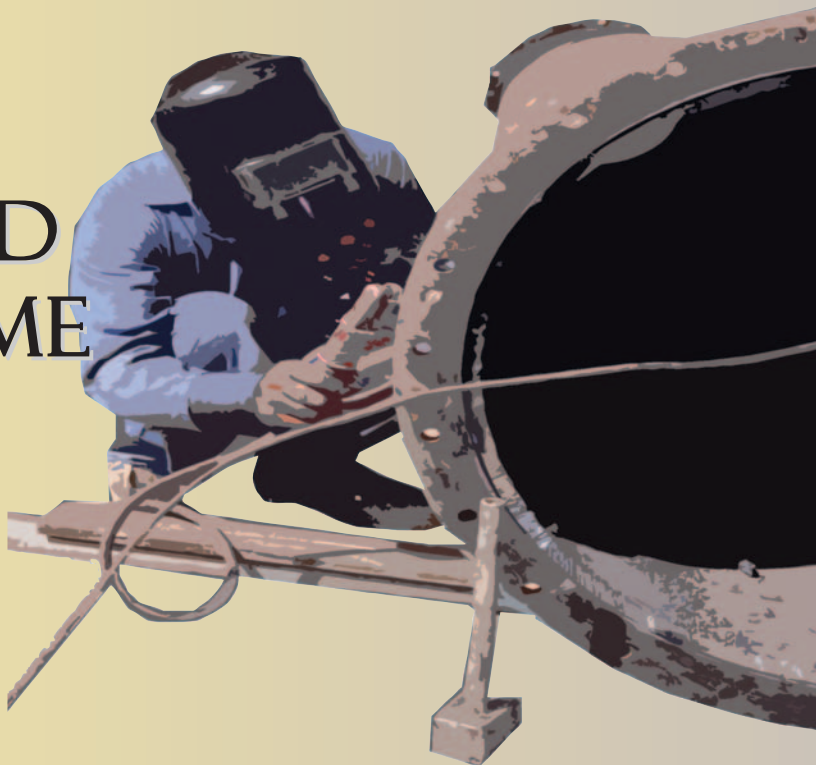
## HELPING BAGHDAD ONE STEP AT A TIME

*Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Brent Williams*

The Soldiers of the 4th Infantry Division's 4th Brigade Combat Team are working very hard at setting the conditions for the Iraqi government to take charge of the essential services and public works within Baghdad.

The brigade's 4th Special Troops Battalion has taken the lead in the fight to help the Iraqi government maintain and improve upon its essential services; utilities such as water, sewer, electricity and sanitation, for the Iraqi people living in southwestern Baghdad, said Lt. Col. Joe Gandara, commander, 4STB.

The battalion's assets, such as the Infrastructure Coordination Element, a group of engineers, officers and Soldiers, dedicated to helping Iraqis take the lead in building a better Baghdad, work with the local Beladiyats, or neighborhoods, and the governing authority to ensure the city of Baghdad is ready to improve the Iraqi people's living conditions.



The foundation of these projects, the infrastructure, is a series of essential services, such as water and electricity, which are essential for the Iraqi people to improve their basic living conditions.

"The Brigade's mission is to create an environment that enables the Iraqi Government to establish rule of law in Baghdad and transition to Iraqi control," said Capt. Ryan Parks, Sewer and Water Projects Manager, 4th STB.

"By developing and managing infrastructure projects, the ICE is helping create that environment," he explained. "If the citizens of Baghdad do not have to worry about necessities such as potable water and electricity, they can focus more on establishing governance and order to Iraq."

To date, the ICE cell has managed 94 essential service projects worth more than \$48 million. The projects also provide both short and long-term employment for Iraqis, to include hiring local laborers from different districts to work on projects.

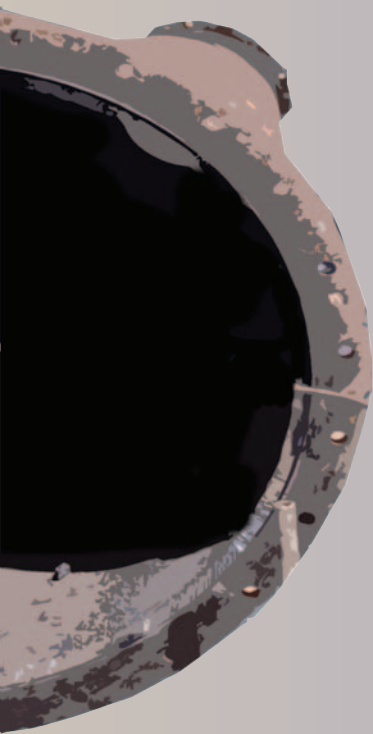
"There are countless neighborhoods and citizens around Baghdad that are benefiting from new infrastructure projects and from rehabilitation projects," he said.

Facing several challenges, to include lack of funding, unemployment and maintaining security in Baghdad, the work that has



**1st Lt. Jesse Bisnette, former Sewer and Water Projects Manager, 4th STB, inspects work done on the generator project designed to provide primary and alternate power to a Water Treatment Plant in Baghdad's Karrada District so that the plant will remain functional for Iraqis during electricity blackouts.**





Baghdad, to include the International Zone, the Karrada Peninsula and Al Rasheed District, the special troops battalion is also responsible for working with the Iraqi governance to facilitate the rebuilding of the infrastructure in the Baghdad area.

"The ICE is also the unit's primary liaison with the Amanat (Baghdad City government), local district utility directors, and outside agencies such as United States Army Corps of Engineers, Project Contracting Office, and the Provincial Reconstruction Team," Parks said.

As the Iraqi government transitions into the role of dispersing interim funds to rebuild the infrastructure, the role of civil military operations is changing, he explained.

"We bridge the gap by developing a relationship with not only the Iraqis, to gain their priorities--that is really where we are trying to focus at," said Maj. Ray Proske, executive officer, 4th Special Troops Battalion, 4th BCT, "but also to make sure that we begin to build a relationship with the (Iraqi) state departments that are currently standing up."

The coordination cell works with local

leaders to identify and service the particular needs of their communities, working especially to coordinate the repair of Iraqi essential services within the brigade's prescribed area of operations.

This task will only be accomplished once the city begins to regulate the essential services it provides to the people living in Baghdad, explained Proske.

The success of the battalion in its mission to improve the lifestyle of the Iraqi people cannot be gauged in dollars or in projects alone, added Gandara.

The real success is developing a relationship between the city government and the local townships within the city to identify and meet the real needs of the people, he said.

The real challenge is teaching civics to the local governance and its people as well as the meaning of a self-representative government, said Gandara.

"We also have the advantage of training the Iraqi people of doing it themselves within the parameters of a normal society," he said. "So that we know that we have built something that will stand; that I know will be a success within the traditions and culture of the Arab peoples."

been accomplished to date is setting the conditions for the Iraqis to be successful.

In addition to supporting the "Cobra" Brigade in its mission to secure and rebuild Central, Western and Southern



The 4th Special Troops Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team inherited many ongoing projects from previous units to include these generators purchased to provide primary and alternative power to a Water Purification Plant in Al Karrada District, Baghdad.



A project to build install generators purchased to provide primary and alternative power to a Water Purification Plant in Al Karrada District, Baghdad is completed by local Iraqi contractors May 2006. The 4th Brigade Combat Team's 4th Special Troops Battalion Infrastructure Coordination Element has managed 94 essential service projects worth more than \$48 million within the brigade AO since beginning work to increase Iraqi essential services.



# GRIFFON Motorpool keeps Soldiers Rollin'

Story and photos by Pfc. Jason Dangel

Soldiers deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, based out of Forward Operating Base Prosperity, know the performance of their vehicles can be the deciding factor between life and death. Before and after every mission, vehicle and equipment maintenance are first and foremost on their minds.

Despite all the attention a Soldier pays to their vehicle, the wear and tear of conducting combat operations eventually causes equipment parts to wear out or break. That's when the mechanics from the 4th Special Troops Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division are called upon for their expertise.

Located in a small motor pool on FOB Prosperity, a section of approximately ten military mechanics work tirelessly

to ensure more than 140 military vehicles are mission ready and equipped with all required armor upgrades for operations in the combat zone.

"Our main mission is to support the battalion and the brigade in maintenance operations," said Staff Sgt. Philip Walls, maintenance shop foreman and platoon sergeant, 4th STB, 4th BCT.

"This includes (High Mobility Multi Wheeled Vehicles), 5 tons, all the power generation equipment that is around the brigade and battalion headquarters. We maintain and quick fix all that equipment," the 13-year veteran from Ludlow, Ky. said.

On busier days, the mechanics see and repair anywhere from 20-40 vehicles and their motor pool and this includes M1114 Up-Armor

HMMWV's, M1078 Light Medium Tactical Vehicles, M1068 Armored Personnel Carriers and M2A3 Bradley Fighting Vehicles, Walls said.

Besides maintenance and repair, the "Griffon" mechanics are also responsible for ensuring all vehicles have all the new armor upgrades required to keep Soldiers safe on the roads in and around Baghdad, said Sgt. Francisco Espinoza, shop foreman, 4th STB, a native of Laredo, Texas

"One of the biggest things we are concerned with right now is the armor on these vehicles," he said. "We have to make sure all the vehicles have what they need."

Espinoza said knowing that he and his Soldiers contribute to the safety of others give his section a sense of pride and satisfaction.

"The armor saves a lot of lives and we are required to put this stuff on to make the vehicles safer for the Soldiers down on the line," Espinoza said.

As the "Dog Days" of summer quickly approach, and temperatures reach an upwards of 130 degrees Fahrenheit it is also extremely important that all air conditioning units inside the vehicles are fully operational.

More and more the Griffon Mechanics are repairing AC units because of the hot conditions, and according to Walls, they expect this trend to continue over the summer months.

"AC repairs are probably the most common repairs we are making these days, Walls said."

Walls emphasized the importance of staying cool and hydrated during the summer months, in which AC units



**Sgt. 1st Class Charles A. Venard, motor pool NCOIC, 4th Special Troops Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team, makes an alteration to engine part at the 4th STB Motorpool at Forward Operating Base Prosperity.**



in armored vehicles is of utmost importance for the Soldiers going out on missions two, sometimes three times a day.

"When something is broken we fix it," Espinoza said. "We have a great bunch of guys working out here, and they make my job very easy," he continued.

Walls and Espinoza both say their Soldiers have gone beyond what is expected of them and have deemed the 4th STB Motor pool a huge success.

"Most the guys were young and new when they first got to the unit, so we took them under our wings, got them all the training they needed and they have been rocking steady since we've been here," Walls said about his Soldiers.

"This motor pool has gone above and beyond success in terms of what is expected of a normal motor pool, Walls said. "You aren't going to find anything better than what is out here and the leaders we have for this motor pool."



Sgt. Francisco Espinoza, mechanic shop foreman, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 4th Special Troops Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, works on a HMMWV at the 4th STB Motor pool at Forward Operating Base Prosperity in central Baghdad June 26.





# THE COBRA TOC

## the Epicenter of the Brigade

Cpl. John Peters and Pvt. Allen Patz, Radio Transmissions Operators, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division talk to Soldiers at 4th Inf. Div. headquarters at the 4th BCT Tactical Operations Center at Forward Operating Base Prosperity.

*Story and photos by Pfc. Jason Dangel*

The brain, defined as a part of the spine and central nervous system, is

responsible for controlling all functions in the human body.

Just like the human brain, the 4th

Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division's Tactical Operation Center, located at Forward Operating Base Prosperity in Baghdad's International Zone, never stops running, and operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The TOC, or Command Post, manages all operations within the brigade combat team. It is where all brigade staff sections come together to bring their expertise to the "fight", said Sgt. Maj. Charles Geisewite, operations sergeant major, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 4th BCT, 4th Inf. Div.

"This 'meeting of the minds' allows the Brigade Commander and Senior Staff to make informed decisions and then implement the plan from one location where all assets are available," Geisewite explained.

The TOC provides a facility for planning, communication, and visualization where the brigade commander and his staffs can access command and control resources, Geisewite said.



Sgt. Maj. Charles Geisewite, operations sergeant major, 4th BCT, 4th Inf. Div. reviews information with Capt. Nicholas Graham, fragmentary order coordinator, 4th BCT, during a commanders update brief inside the TOC located at Forward Operating Base Prosperity.





**CW3 Travis Jackson, aviation chief, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division coordinates flights times for brigade personnel at the Tactical Operations Center located at Forward Operating Base Prosperity.**

"Inside the CP, the command group has access to 'real time' data, voice and imagery to make critical decisions rapidly," said Geisewite, a native of Austin, Texas.

Operations in the command post range from combat operations to peace enforcement, intelligence gathering, information operations, policing, essential services, and a multitude of other operations that require a variety of skills to accomplish the combat team's mission.

"The Command Post is not the 'heart,' that as always is the Soldiers that make up the Brigade," Geisewite explained. "Everyone must work together seamlessly in order to function successfully."

U.S. military personnel are not the only ones involved in the "Cobra" Brigades TOC operations.

As described by Geisewite, the Command Post is joint and multinational, meaning representatives from sister services and other Coalition Forces play key roles and vital assets to the Cobra team.

U.S. Air Force and Navy, the British Army and liaison officers from the Georgian Army are all key players in the mission in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The separate sections and individuals must work together and provide the Command Group the information needed to accomplish the mission.

On any given day, the Soldiers operating in the TOC communicate with the brigade's seven different battalions, and report all significant activity occurring in the area of operations to their 4th Inf. Div. Headquarters.

According to Capt. Nicholas Graham, fragmentary order coordinator, HHC, 4th BCT, everyone working in the TOC has a part in the success of operations.

"The TOC basically consolidates all the information from all our different battalions," he explained. "If there is an event that happens out in our battle space, or out on a convoy or patrol, all the information is reported to us here in the TOC, and we act accordingly depending on the situation."

"There is not one function that I can say is the TOC's bread and butter. There are so many moving pieces, and everything must fall into place in order for us to be successful," said the native of Hanover, Ind.

A new member to the TOC team, Cpl. John Peters, Command Post of the Future Operator and Radio Transmissions Operator, HHC, 4th BCT, admits the days can sometimes be very boring but said things can change in an instant.

The young noncommissioned officer from Fresno, Calif., reminisced about his time on the ground conducting patrols during his first deployment to

Iraq in 2004, and said his experience on the ground helps him successfully accomplish his job in the TOC.

"Sometimes when units on the ground are reporting some kind of an incident, I can visualize what is taking place because I've been there, and it makes it easier for me to record the event and pass it onto (4th Infantry) Division," he said.



**Cpl. John Peters, Radio Transmissions Operator, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 4th BCT, 4th Inf. Div. responds to a call from the 8th Squadron, 10th Cavalry at the brigade Tactical Operations Center FOB Prosperity.**



# SPOT REPORT

Soldiers from Co. B, 704th Battalion, 4th BCT prepare for a supply push at FOB Prosperity. The gun truck platoon or "Rat Platoon" allows the 704th Support Battalion to accomplish all assigned missions without relying on the maneuver battalions of the 4BCT to escort combat logistics patrols throughout the Brigade's battle space.



U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Jason Dangel



U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Jason Dangel

**Multi-National Forces - Iraq Commander General George Casey addresses Soldiers during a naturalization ceremony at Camp Victory in western Baghdad. Four Soldiers from the 4th BCT became official members of the United States on America's Birthday, July 4.**



U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Jason Dangel

**Staff Sgt. Glenn Living, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, flips burgers and dogs on a grill outside Forward Operating Base Prosperity's Chapel. Soldiers from around the 4th BCT, deployed in Baghdad's International Zone, gathered at the Prosperity Chapel for food, fun and fellowship on Prosperity Lake celebrating the Nation's Birthday.**



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Brent Williams



U.S. Army Photo Pfc. Jason Dangel

**(ABOVE) Iraqi soldiers learn how to fight in urban setting with U.S. Army instructors at Forward Operating Base Honor June 10.**

**(LEFT) Sgt. Nolan Dawson, team leader, Company A, 2nd Battalion, 506th Infantry Regiment, gives money to a WWII Veteran, living in Al Doura, Baghdad, to buy food and fuel.**



U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Jason Dangel

**Staff Sgt. Leonard Hopkins, 1st Battalion, 12th Infantry, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Military Integrated Transition Team, leads a group of Iraqi Army soldiers through PT at Forward Operating Base Honor June 13. MITT Soldiers not only train the Iraqi Soldiers for combat, they also stress the importance of physical fitness as well. Hopkins is a native of Brooklyn.**